



Column For Week of: January 12, 2009

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A New Day for Missouri

This week was an exciting one at the Capitol as Missouri's new governor, Jay Nixon, was sworn-in. The event was attended by citizens from throughout Missouri, and many were enthused to see the "changing of the guard." One of the most meaningful events of the day was when the new governor delivered his inauguration speech. Many of the points he made will be important to keep in mind throughout the legislative session.

One issue the new governor focused on during his inauguration address was the idea that Missouri must remain united. While many want to point fingers at the past, it is more important for us to look forward and focus on what we can do for our state. We are facing many challenges today, and we must address these immediately, but without losing sight of the long-term plan for the future.

Gov. Nixon also discussed that new leadership on a state and federal level would not be enough to revive our communities. He highlighted the importance of service and volunteerism, and I know we have many examples of hard working individuals in the 16th Senate District. This week, we took the time on the Senate floor to recognize 12 outstanding individuals in our state.

Each year, the Senate produces a themed calendar. This year, the theme was "Missouri's Unsung Heroes," and we asked individuals to nominate groups or individuals they thought deserved the designation. The numerous nominations were then sent to a committee, and 12 were selected for the calendar. Two of these unsung heroes were from the 16th District.

Lori Amato dedicates her time to helping women who are often scared and facing a difficult situation. She established and runs the Lifeline Pregnancy Care Center in Cuba. The center she established helps women with unplanned pregnancies by offering free and

confidential counseling, parenting classes, and resources. She also volunteers by teaching parenting classes for new parents.

Shirley Reed was recognized for her work with the Golden Echoes Senior Center in Steelville. She has remained committed for more than 10 years to making sure that those who need meals receive them. She has worked hard to prepare and manage the home-delivered meals so many in the area depend on. She serves as the board president of Golden Echoes, Inc. and volunteers at least five days a week in the center, sometimes putting in additional hours during catering events.

On Monday, Gov. Nixon said, “Tough times call for a renewed sense of purpose.” Lori and Shirley join the many citizens in the 16th District who have this sense of purpose to lend a helping hand to those in need. As we continue to work in Jefferson City to better our state, I thank everyone out there who chooses to get involved in the community and make a difference in our area.

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As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. Please feel free to call me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2108. You can also write to at the address listed below.

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